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Dorgan says House and Senate action makes clear it's time to "end this absurdity":

SENATE OK'S LIFTING FOOD AND MEDICINE SANCTIONS ON CUBA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) — The U.S. Senate approved legislation Thursday night containing Senator Byron Dorgan's (D-ND) amendment lifting unilateral U.S. food and medicine embargoes against Cuba and five other nations. The language was part of the Agriculture Appropriations bill which the Senate approved 79-13. The amendment, which Dorgan and Senator Slade Gorton (R-WA) added in the Senate Appropriations Committee, was not challenged during full Senate consideration of the legislation and is part of the bill that now goes to a House-Senate conference committee.

The Senate action occurred the same night the U.S. House voted by a 3-1 margin to approve separate legislation barring the use of federal funds to enforce the embargoes.

"Both chambers have now taken a strong position," Dorgan said. "It is time to end this absurdity. These embargoes on food and medicine don't work. They only harm U.S. farmers and poor and sick people in the affected countries. Barring the shipment of food and medicine to hungry and sick people is not a tactic worthy of a great nation, and clearly, strong majorities in both the House and Senate want to put a stop to it."

Dorgan and Senator John Ashcroft (R-MO) succeeded last year in attaching similar language to that year's Agriculture Appropriations bill, but House leaders stripped it out. They dissolved the conference committee, rather than allow it to approve the measure, which it was preparing to do.

"If they think they are going to highjack this again this year, I'm putting everyone on notice that they will run into a very determined fight to keep it in," Dorgan said.

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